

REMARKS

Claims 10-12, 14-17, 19-28, 30-32, and 34-37 are pending in the application. Claims 10, 27, 28, 30-32, and 34 have been amended by present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed (see, e.g., specification at page 3, lines 27-30; and page 5, lines 8-23).

The abstract was objected to because of "means" language. The abstract has been amended to delete the "means" language. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 10, 27, and 34 have been amended to each recite that a plurality of locking tangs are formed in a female part for engaging a male part, each of the locking tangs having at least one recess "configured for receiving a tool to disengage the connection between the male and female parts," and where "a longitudinal axis running through a center of the at least one recess extends transversely to a direction of movement of the locking tangs upon disengagement of the male and female parts," as claimed.

For example, referring to FIGS. 3-4 of the application, a recess 4 can be engaged by a tool to urge locking tangs 2 outwardly to disengage a male part 8 from a female part 1 (see, e.g., specification at page 5, lines 15-19). Further, as shown in FIGS. 3-4 of the application, the recess 4 has a longitudinal axis running through a center of the recess 4, which extends transversely to a direction of movement of the tangs 2 upon disengagement (see, e.g., specification at page 3, lines 27-30).

Claims 10-12, 14-17, 19-28, 30-32, and 34-37 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,150,930 to Petty et al. ("Petty"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 10, 27, and 34 over Petty, the Petty reference does not teach or suggest a connector or a method for forming a releasable connection between a female part and a male part in which at least one recess is "configured for receiving a tool to disengage the connection between the male and female parts," where "a longitudinal axis running through a center of the at least one recess extends transversely to a direction of movement of the locking tangs upon disengagement of the male and female parts," as claimed.

Referring to FIGS. 1-2 of Petty, a corrugated pipe connector 1 includes resilient locking members or fingers 9 that are formed in walls of a bore 5, where a tool can be inserted into an opening 14 of the finger 9 to force projections 10 out of the bore 5 (see column 4, lines 19-23 of Petty).

On page 3, lines 1-2 of the Office Action of 08/24/2010 (as repeated on page 8 in the "Response to Arguments" section), it was stated that the opening 14 of Petty "includes a longitudinal axis along which a longitudinal dimension is defined and radial axes along which radial dimensions are defined."

However, there is no teaching or suggestion in Petty that a longitudinal axis running through a center of the opening 14 of Petty "extends transversely to a direction of movement of" the finger 9 upon disengagement.

In contrast, in Petty, the opening 14 is formed directly through the finger 9, such that a longitudinal axis through the opening 14 is in a direction of movement of the finger 9 during disengagement of the piping from the connector.

The above-described arrangement of Petty is undesirable for use with the Applicants' claimed invention at least because it requires a tool to be inserted into a space where a male part (here, the piping) is received, which may damage the male part during disengagement.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the Petty reference does not anticipate or otherwise render obvious the Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, independent claims 10, 27, and 34 and their respective dependent claims are patentable over Petty.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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